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SOURCE Preradjivacka Industrija.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDICAL INDUSTRY IN YUGOSLAVIA

Engineer Lj Trinajstic

The work of prewar Yugoslav medical industry consisted mostly of compounding pharmaceutical preparations by combining sugar, sirup, or honey with imported pharmaceuticals. This was done in a few laboratories and small enterprises, such as the "Alkaloid" in Skoplje, the "IFA" and the "Kastel" in Zagreb, which were financed chiefly by Yugoslav capital. The "Kastel" firm was the first to begin producing organic pharmaceuticals, in 1935.

The production of these enterprises was very limited, both in assortment and quantity. Prewar imports of medicines amounted to 300 million dinars, while Yugoslav production amounted to only 30 million dinars. This consisted mostly of repacking imported tablets. Prepared mixtures were used less frequently. Production was on such an elementary level that even the few existing machines were quite obsolete.

Not a single enterprise existed for the production of surgical and dental instruments. However, serums and vaccines were produced in sufficient quantities to satisfy Yugoslav needs, and for export as well.

After the war, all existing medical enterprises and laboratories were taken over by the state, and combined in four large enterprises. These were the "Alkaloid" Medical Factory, the "Pliva" (including the former "IKA," "Kastel," and "Plibah" factories) Factory, the "Lek" (Medicine) Factory, and the "Pionir" Dietetics Preparations Factory.

In addition, three completely new enterprises were established: the "Galenika" Pharmaceutical Preparations Factory, the "Prolek" Medical Factory, the "Sutjeska" Surgical and Pharmaceutical Instrument Factory, and the "Jogodent" Dental-Instrument and Equipment Factory.

Immediately after the war, the "Gumpro" (Main Administration for Medical Production), under the Ministry of Health, was established to administer the medical industry. The most recent reorganization of the Yugoslav economy

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transfers medical enterprises to the republic General Administrations of the Chemical Industry, except for the "Lek" Factory, which is taken over by the Ministry of Health of Slovenia, while the "Sutjeska" and "Jugodent" Enterprises are taken over by the General Administration of the Metal-Processing Industry of Serbia.

The Five-Year Plan calls on the medical industry to produce medicines for the effective and economical medical treatment of malaria, tuberculosis, syphilis, and other communicable diseases. Imports of pharmaceuticals are to be reduced to 25 percent of the amount imported in 1939, and imports of surgical instruments and equipment to 20 percent of the 1939 figure.

Therefore, the Scientific Research Institute which includes the Central Institute in Belgrade (work to date includes the production of amidopyrine, phenacetin, various anesthetics, antibiotics, etc.), the research laboratory in the "Pliva" Factory (work to date includes the production of antimalaria medicines, diuretics, crystalline insulin, zincprotamine, concentrated serum, sulfaguanidine, sulfathiozol, etc.), and the research laboratory in the "Lek" Factory (work to date includes the production of ether, bismuth and mercury salts, various glycosides in a crystalline state, etc.), was established in Belgrade.

The Scientific Research Institute's function is to master the technical procedures for making pharmaceuticals first in the laboratory, then in industry; to keep in constant touch with the latest technical research through scientific literature, so that the most valuable current scientific developments can be applied to production; and to be a school for supplying the pharmaceutical industry with specialists.

A machine-designing bureau, to plan installations and equipment for the medical industry and to supervise the installation and assembly of equipment, has been established. Most of the installations and equipment of the "Prolek" and "Galenika" (penicillin) factories were planned and supervised by this bureau.

The "Pliva" Factory has a designing bureau which planned and supervised the assembly of all equipment and installations in its new buildings, while the factory's own workshop made most of the equipment installed.

The increase in production of medical products and the decrease in their import is shown as follows:

Year	Percent Produced in Yugoslavia	Percent Imported
1939	100	850
1945	108	530
1946	420	92
1947	870	49
1948	1,700	23
1949	2,500	14.6

The Yugoslav medical industry has not only increased the volume, but also the assortment of the pharmaceuticals now being produced in Yugoslavia. Products now made include sulfaguanidine, sulfathiazole, ascorbic acid, ethylphenyl barbituric acid, nicotinic acid, phenylchinoline acid, histidine hydrochloride, diethyl barbituric acid, diethylamid nicotinic acid, amidopyrine, phenacetin, codeine, papaverine, filicin, atropine, pilocarpine, secalin, penicillin, cortin, heparin, holesterin /oleostearate?/ pancreatin, pepsin, peptone, hypophysin, dry testin, dry ovarin, dry thyroidin, sodium cholalic, ether for narcosis, pure reagents, diagnostic preparations, etc.

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The Yugoslav medical industry is producing certain products in quantities greater than needed and importing them. These products include various hormone preparations, serums, toxins, glycosides, alkaloid opium, and various bismuth, mercury, and silver salts, etc. In 1949, about 11 percent of the pharmaceuticals imported were paid for by export of Yugoslav-made pharmaceuticals.

The production of medical, surgical, and dental instruments and equipment is completely new and was very difficult for Yugoslav until personnel was trained. The shortage of personnel is still one of the main obstacles to increasing production. The "Sutjeska" and "Jugodent" enterprises are increasing their production every day, so that they are now supplying 65 percent of Yugoslav needs for medical, surgical, and dental instruments and equipment.

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